



Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 5410.1

September 27, 1973

ASD(PA)

SUBJECT: Release of Information Concerning Accidental Casualties Involving
Military Personnel or equipment

References: (a) DoD Directive 5410.1, subject as above, October 22, 1952 (hereby
canceled)
(b) [DoD Directive 5410.14](#), "Cooperation with News Media News
Media Representatives at the Scene of Military Accidents Occurring
Outside Military Installations," October 25, 1963

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes uniform Department of Defense policy on the release of information concerning military personnel involved in accidents. Additionally, it establishes approval authority for release of casualty information concerning key U.S. and foreign government personnel when the U.S. military is the responsible agency.

2. APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this Directive apply to the Military Departments. The terms "Military Service" or "Services" as used herein refer to the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the Air Force.

3. CANCELLATION

Reference (a) is hereby superseded and canceled.

4. ACCIDENTS WITHIN ARMED FORCES INSTALLATIONS

In all cases of accidents within the confines of installations of the Armed Forces:

4.1. Public release of names and addresses of killed or injured military personnel should be withheld until such time as the next-of-kin can reasonably be expected to have received the official notification of the accident.

4.2. Every effort should be made, however, to release such names and addresses simultaneously with, or as soon thereafter as possible, the release of accident news itself, so as to remove or lessen the anxiety of relatives of other personnel on the installation.

5. ACCIDENTS OUTSIDE ARMED FORCES INSTALLATIONS

In all cases of accidents outside the confines of installations of the Armed Forces:

5.1. If military personnel figure in accidents involving civilian or military automobiles, trains, commercial or private airplanes, or in any other type of accident, with the exception of subsection 5.3., below, the names and addresses of the military personnel should be released to competent authorities immediately upon identification. Every effort should be made to notify next-of-kin prior to public release.

5.2. If the accidents involve military airplanes which crash in or upon the borders of cities or towns, or which cause civilian casualties or appreciable damage to property--that is, if there has been a major invasion of the civilian domain--the names and addresses of the military personnel should be released immediately upon notification of next-of-kin after delaying a reasonable time for such notification; if classified equipment is involved, normal security precautions should be observed with respect to the equipment.

5.3. If the accidents involve military airplanes which crash in localities remote from populated areas, involve no civilian casualties, and cause no appreciable property damage--that is, if there has been no major invasion of the civilian domain--names and addresses of the military personnel should be withheld until such time as the next-of-kin can reasonably be expected to have received official notification of the accident.

6. RELEASE OF CASUALTY INFORMATION ABOUT KEY UNITED STATES AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL

Because of national and international interest and implications, the release of casualty information concerning key U.S. Government personnel or equivalent-rank foreign government visitors will be carefully coordinated. Casualty information on key personnel as designated below when killed, injured or listed as missing while on a military installation or being transported by military vehicle will be directed to the following offices for public announcement:

6.1. The White House Press Secretary will have sole approval authority for release of news regarding:

6.1.1. The President of the United States.

6.1.2. The Vice President of the United States

6.1.3. Speaker of the House of Representatives.

6.1.4. President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

6.1.5. Members of the Cabinet.

6.1.6. Foreign visitors of political or royal rank equivalent to the above list of U.S. Government officials.

6.1.7. Any members of foreign governments below the rank of the preceding category but guests of the United States and chiefs of foreign military services who are United States guests.

6.2. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) will approve the release of news regarding:

6.2.1. U.S. Senators.

6.2.2. U.S. Representatives.

6.2.3. Secretaries of the Military Departments.

6.2.4. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

6.2.5. Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

6.2.6. Chief of Naval Operations.

6.2.7. Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force.

6.2.8. Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps.

6.2.9. Commanders, Unified and Specified Commands.

6.3. Military Departments will be the approving authority for release of information concerning U.S. military personnel when casualty reporting falls within their zone of responsibility.

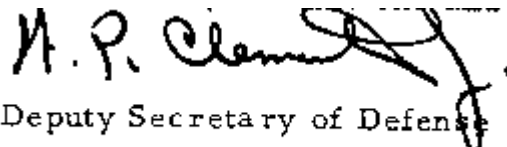
6.4. Accidents involving military officers in the grade of O-9 or above or civilians of equivalent rank will be handled by the Services concerned under the provisions of their existing regulations; however, the Directorate for Defense Information, OASD(PA), (OX7-5131) will be informed of the accident prior to release.

6.5. In those cases covered by subsections 6.3. and 6.4., above, the Military Services may authorize local information officers to release information prior to notification of ASD(PA) in response to specific queries from the press concerning individuals by name. However, every effort will be made to affect immediate notification of ASD(PA).

6.6. Accidents occurring outside of the United States will require additional coordination with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to insure proper notification to host government.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive is effective immediately. Two copies of implementing regulations shall be forwarded to the ASD(PA) within 60 days.


Deputy Secretary of Defense